



Kerr Dam

PUBLIC FACILITIES

Executive Summary—Conditions and Trends

Aging, obsolete and extremely expensive facilities, public safety, growth pressures and environmental concerns are issues that surround the operation and construction of public facilities. Lake County must address these issues with limited grant and loan funding opportunities and a tax base that is reduced due to the number of exempt parcels of land.

Transportation issues are of primary concern in Lake County. U.S. Highway 93 is a heavily traveled corridor that presents safety problems due to increased traffic and outdated design. A conceptual improvement agreement was signed in December of 2000, although many of the details are not yet final. Any improvement to the corridor must be based on a design that includes efficiency, environmental impacts, safety, growth management techniques, and the concerns of all parties. Maintenance of County roads is another area of concern. The Lake County government has limited resources to maintain approximately 1100 miles of mostly unpaved roads, many of which are in poor condition. Future rural subdivisions will result in additional road maintenance needs, air quality concerns, non-motorized transportation needs and pressure to upgrade existing roads at the expense of the taxpayer.

Growth demands are creating the need to upgrade other facilities as well. The wastewater treatment systems in St. Ignatius and Pablo are at capacity and no new infrastructure extensions are being allowed until upgrades are in

place. Polson has drilled new water wells and must expand its distribution system to meet demands. Charlo and Arlee are attempting to expand and develop new sewer and water capacity. The Woods Bay area, Big Arm, Dayton and Rocky Point are all investigating developing sewer and/or water infrastructure. Lake County is closing its landfill and planning to transfer its solid waste to a regional facility in Missoula and Mission Valley Power is planning a new substation in Ronan to meet the needs of expanding industry.

In addition to growth demands, public facilities are in need of upgrades to avoid becoming obsolete. Mission Valley Power is replacing outdated substations and the airports in Ronan and Polson have both undergone major expansion projects. Environmental awareness also results in new procedures being adopted. The City of Polson has adopted a source water (wellhead) protection plan to protect its drinking water. The Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes (Tribes) are pursuing remedial efforts for old landfills and have cleaned up a dozen sites within the last several years.

Historical and political divides must also be bridged so that public facilities can be developed and expanded to meet current and future needs. Efforts are underway to adjudicate water rights on the Flathead Indian Reservation. The outcome of this project—whether through negotiation or litigation—could have major impacts on how Lake County develops. Local, state, federal and tribal

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governments each have jurisdiction over various public facilities. Coordination and cooperation among agencies to identify and prioritize needs will help to meet present and future demands. Both

the Tribes and Lake County have tapped a variety of state and federal funds to upgrade infrastructure and will continue to rely on these and other resources as service demands continue to grow.

Transportation

Transportation and land use are interrelated components of communities. Transportation routes and infrastructure can help to determine where development will occur. At the same time, land use and development trends determine traffic volume, travel patterns and road improvement needs. The relationship between transportation and land use necessitates an integrated approach for these two planning elements.

For example, large lot home sites are a common type of development along the gravel roads of the Lake County countryside. This type of development provides residents with a piece of Lake County's rural lifestyle, while allowing them to be within easy traveling distance of local shopping and employment. Despite its attraction, this low-density development results in longer vehicle trips to destinations, contributes to congestion and safety concerns on the highways and air quality concerns in the countryside. Additionally, rural residential subdivisions do not typically generate sufficient tax revenue to pay for the public services and to maintain the roads that they require. However, it is clear that many homeowners prefer low-density developments because of the rural character and recreational opportunities they provide.

Transportation corridors can have a significant effect on land use patterns. Heavily traveled corridors attract commercial proprietors seeking highly visible locations. Roadside business and advertising sign development may impact scenic and cultural values while increasing local traffic congestion and deteriorating aesthetics that result in decreased safety and community character. However, the development also provides jobs and economic stability. Failure to plan for these factors can negatively influ-

ence other quality of life issues such as air quality, noise pollution, congestion, scenic quality and safety. Consequently, planning for transportation is a critical component for guiding growth as well as for providing healthy, safe, attractive and economically viable communities.

Roads and Highways

Lake County maintains a total of 1153 miles of roads that range from county highways to local access type roadways. Paved surfaces account for about 230 miles with the remaining 923 miles gravel surfaced. Lake County also maintains approximately 100 bridges. Clayey soils, found throughout much of the area, cause roadbeds to deteriorate and create dust problems that negatively impact air quality. Maintaining roads is expensive and is one of the largest items on a landowner's county portion of a property tax bill. In addition to general maintenance, the Lake County Road Department's resources allow it to typically re-surface and reconstruct three to six road segments per year for a total of about 10 miles of roadway. Because fiscal resources are scarce and road improvements can lead to adjacent land development, Lake County intends to prioritize road upgrade projects with an eye toward linking communities, improving air quality and providing incentive to develop near existing population centers.

Some of the road issues Lake County has grappled with over the years include heavily developed dead end roadways that do not provide emergency egress, rights-of-way along publicly used roads that are not dedicated to the public and cannot be expanded, and the need for different road surfacing, sidewalk, snow storage and easement standards in urban-type subdivisions. Lake County intends to address these is-

sues in the coming years through the measures described in the Goals and Objectives section of this chapter.

No interstate highways traverse Lake County. U.S. 93, a north-south route extending the entire length of Lake County, is part of the National Highway System and is classified as a principal arterial. Montana 35, on the east side of Flathead Lake, and Highway 83, through Swan Valley, are part of Montana's primary highway system and act as minor arterials. Parts of Highway 35 have undergone or are planned to undergo expansion and development in the near future. The state secondary highway system in Lake County includes Route 212, serving Charlo and Moiese, Route 211 (Round Butte Road), west of Ronan, and Route 354 (Back Road), south of Polson. Certain county roads are classified as minor collectors and feed into this highway system.

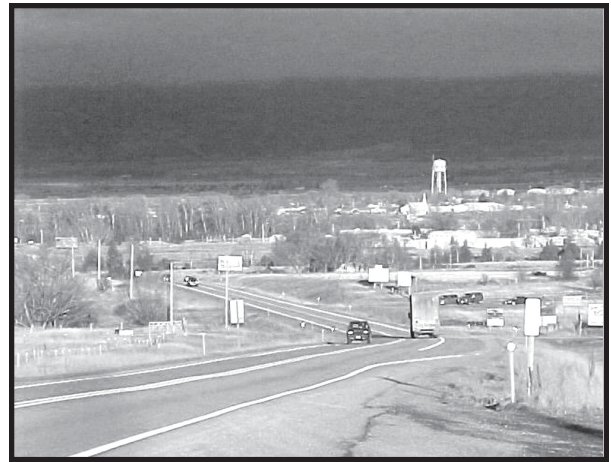
Federal funding for U.S. and state highways comes from the National Highway System Program and the Surface Transportation Program. The primary source of funding for Lake County's road improvements is the general fund. The federal Bridge Replacement and Rehabilitation Program allows some funds to be used for local roads while the State Construction Fund, from state gas tax dollars, is for projects not eligible for federal aid. The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) prepares a three year Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) that allocates funding for road improvements. Lake County is in District 1 - Missoula.

In addition to the highway system there are U.S. Forest Service and Tribal/BIA roads that access the public forest and Tribal lands. The Tribal/BIA road system includes residential streets as well as forest roads. In 1997, the Tribes adopted a 10-year Transportation Plan that describes the entire transportation network on the Flathead Reservation and plans for improvements. The Tribes annually prepare a three-year transportation improvement plan and submit it to federal, state and local agencies for review

and coordination. Since 1995, the Tribal Roads Program has completed nearly six million dollars worth of construction on roads in Lake County including a portion of the St. Ignatius streets. An additional \$1.7 million is proposed for improvements in the Ronan and Pablo areas.

U.S. 93

U.S. 93 between Hamilton and Polson is the most heavily traveled non-interstate corridor in Montana. The highway carries a mix of traffic including passenger automobiles, commercial vehicles, logging trucks, recreational vehicles and agricultural vehicles. In Lake County there is substantial visitor traffic in the summer between Missoula and Kalispell/Glacier Park. The highway passes through most of the major communities of Lake County as well as through irrigated agricultural land, wetlands, over streams and along Flathead Lake. The land



Highway 93 looking northeast toward St.

along the highway is controlled by both tribal and non-tribal interests. How this corridor develops in the coming years will have a major impact on how residents and visitors see and feel about Lake County in the future.

In Lake County the Highway 93 segment carrying the most traffic is between Polson and Ronan. At Polson some traffic disperses to Highway 35. The MDT Congestion Management System determines the level of service (LOS) of highways in the state. LOS is a rating system

that provides a scale of operation, with “A” being smoothly flowing traffic and “F” indicating severe congestion. Generally “C” or better is considered desirable. As of 1999, all of the segments on U.S. 93 were rated as LOS “D”. The 20-year rating indicates that without any improvements these segments will worsen to a LOS “E” or “F”.

The low current and projected levels of service, along with safety, environmental and cultural concerns, prompted representatives from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA),

crossings to be built to facilitate habitat links and migration.

Construction dates have not yet been finalized, although engineering and design work is underway as of this writing. During construction, it would be of great benefit to residents, visitors and businesses if a system of chip-sealed or paved detours was established that could allow smooth traffic flow while limiting the impacts to the surrounding communities and environment.

Table 5-1: U.S. 93 Average Daily Traffic – 1997

Segment	Total ADT	Commercial ADT	1999 LOS	20 Year LOS
Arlee to Ravalli	6,590	857	D	F
Ravalli to Ronan	8,680	755	D	E
Ronan to Polson	10,500	788	D	F
Polson to Elmo	7,420	482	D	E
Hwy 35 (Polson to Woods Bay)	3,810	229	--	--
Hwy 83 (Through Swan Valley)	930	76	--	--

Source: Montana Department of Transportation, "Rural Traffic Flow Map: Interstate, Non-Interstate NHS, and State Primary", 1997 & MDT Congestion Management System, 1999

MDT and the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes to assess how to rebuild the highway in a manner that incorporates the concerns of all parties. In December 2000, after years of discussions, studies, negotiations, stalemates and compromises, the parties issued a memorandum of agreement on Highway 93 reconstruction. The memorandum states that the FHWA, MDT and Tribes agree to a highway design and lane configuration for the majority of the roadway from Evaro (in Missoula County) to Polson. (As of November 2002, the road segments from Post Creek to Ronan in the Ninepipe area and in and around Polson have not been finalized.) The agreement provides guidelines for roadway alignment and configuration, visitor centers and overlooks, signage, land reclamation, access management, and pedestrian crossings. Perhaps the most innovative component of the agreement is the extensive addition of fish and wildlife

Other Transportation

Public Transit - Public transit opportunities are somewhat limited in Lake County, although there are options for special needs segments of the population, as described below. The typical commuter in Lake County drives his or her own vehicle to and from work and there is no general service transit system in the Mission Valley. However, the Missoula-Ravalli Transportation Management Agency (MR TMA) currently operates a vanpool that travels daily between St. Ignatius and Missoula. Representatives of MR TMA state that they may extend service up the valley as warranted by demand.

The Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes and other public agencies provide several transit options. Salish & Kootenai College operates a shuttle bus from towns within Lake County. The Lake County Council on Aging and the Tribal Aging services offer para-transit

services where users can call for transportation for meals, shopping, or medical appointments. Medicaid will reimburse trips on South Lake Taxi or Mission Valley Medi-Cab. Additionally, Cheerful Heart, Inc. is a non-profit organization that provides free short-term non-medical services (shopping, transportation, etc.) for residents who are undergoing cancer treatments.

Air - Polson, Ronan, and St. Ignatius have public airports with paved runways that are used for private airplanes. Polson has charter service available. A \$2,000,000 improvement project was recently completed for the Polson airport that included runway and taxi area upgrades, runway lighting, a helicopter pad and other improvements. The Ronan airport has also upgraded facilities that include better hangar access and a helicopter pad. Numerous new hangars are being built along the runways of all three airports. The nearest airports with commercial jet service are in Missoula and Kalispell.

Airports are becoming an ever more important piece of the transportation infrastructure picture and the volume of traffic at the airports appears to be increasing steadily. The area is becoming more developed with high tax generating seasonal homes and accessibility is always an issue. Additionally, businesses require the ability to get to and from their facilities with speed and ease. Recent subdivision activity in the vicinity of the St. Ignatius airport is a sign that future planning may be required to protect the integrity and future expansion capabilities of the airports within Lake County. An airport board, which is comprised of representatives of the county and the incorporated towns, may have to wrestle with this subject in the near future.

Rail/Bus - Montana Rail Link provides freight service in Lake County with a spur line running from Dixon to Polson. North and south bus service is provided by Rimrock Trailways with connecting service in Missoula and Kalispell.

Bike/Pedestrian Pathways - Non-motorized bicycle and pedestrian pathways can be enormous assets to communities. They are used for health and family recreation by people of all

ages, particularly seniors and the young who don't always have motorized transportation. They can provide safe and efficient routes between schools, churches, stores and recreation sites. They also tend to encourage economic development in their vicinity because potential customers are out and about recreating. Additionally, pedestrian and bike trails aid in lowering traffic congestion and improving air quality, particularly within communities. When non-motorized transportation routes are planned and built along with development projects, they become an integral component of the local infrastructure. When not included in development projects, the infrastructure is generally difficult to retrofit.

A number of pedestrian and bicycle trails have been planned and/or constructed in Lake County including along Rocky Point Road, Hillcrest, along Highway 35 to Ducharme Landing, and potentially along U.S. Highway 93, all in the Polson area. Additionally, a pathway along Round Butte Road is in the works and is being funded through federal and state Community Transportation Enhancement Program funds. Pathways that are separated from road surfaces typically have greater user rates than those attached to a roadway because of perceived safety benefits, although they are more difficult to maintain.

Some of the primary assets of Lake County include scenic views, environmental quality and recreational opportunities. As the population of Lake County ages, additional non-motorized pathways will provide healthy recreational opportunities and could act as an economic and community development tool by attracting people who seek a healthy and active lifestyle. Ideas for future pathways should be incorporated into a county-wide recreation plan and non-motorized transportation options should be included in major and urban subdivisions.

Community Water Facilities

Community water facilities provide safe and efficient water supplies to residents and busi-

nesses. They provide much needed services and benefits including good health, fire protection and economic development opportunities. Community water facilities also have the ability to encourage compact development and channel population growth and development to existing population centers.

The municipalities of Polson, Ronan, and St. Ignatius have municipal water systems. Citizens of Charlo and Pablo have formed water districts to operate the existing water systems. Arlee residents have formed a water district that has completed preliminary planning and obtained some funding for a water treatment and distribution system. Residents of the Sheaver's Creek area (Woods Bay) have also formed a water district and are planning to replace an aging water system with a safer, more modern one. They have recently received grant funding to help pay for some of the expense. Most of the rural residences in Lake County have individual wells, but some residents use surface water from Flathead Lake or local creeks as their water source.

The primary obstacles to expanding the existing public and community water systems and completing new ones are technical knowledge, cost and, on the Flathead Indian Reservation, the lack of adjudicated water rights. Lake County staff and private consulting engineers help to guide residents over the bureaucratic hurdles and will continue to do so in the coming years. Upgrades to existing systems typically cost hundreds of thousands of dollars and new systems usually cost millions. Grant funding is limited and the number of projects always exceeds the available funds.

With the uncertain legal status regarding water use permits, no new high capacity wells are being drilled at present. This effectively caps the number of service hook-ups a water district may offer to its current capacity. With a projected ending date of 2010 or later, the lack of certainty regarding water rights may severely limit economic development in the near future. Another result may be to push residential development away from municipal and commu-

nity water systems and onto individual wells into the countryside. This may result in impacts to resources such as agricultural operations and wildlife habitat. Coming up with a fair and consistent legal framework and system for administering water use permits is of primary importance to the citizens of Lake County.

The Salish and Kootenai Housing Authority operates 14 water systems in reservation communities that serve both Tribal and non-Tribal members. Public drinking water systems that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and delegated states and tribes regulate include publicly- or privately-owned systems that serve at least 25 people or 15 service connections for at



The Pablo water tower.

least 60 days per year. Through the Public Water System Supervision program, the EPA implements and enforces drinking water standards to protect public health. The EPA lists 111 water systems that are regulated in Lake County. These include municipal systems, water districts, private systems and systems constructed to serve subdivisions.

At one time, Polson's main water supply was from Hell Roaring Creek. Due to water quality issues, the City now relies on four wells. The present system has seven reservoirs with a storage capacity of 3.5 million gallons. Due to the limited capacity to serve Polson residents and businesses, the City has had to institute water usage restrictions in the summers since 1999. Polson recently drilled two high-capacity wells with one million gallons of storage on the west side of the Flathead River. The City now must decide whether to try to bring the water across

the river to the main part of town where the demand is the greatest or try to develop new facilities on the east side of the river. In 1994, Polson adopted the “Polson Wellhead Protection Plan” to maintain a safe water supply. The plan identifies potential sources of contamination and institutes prevention strategies. This plan will be amended to address the current water sources and modified geographic protection areas.

Ronan relies on groundwater from two wells and surface water from Middle Crow Creek. Surface water is treated with chlorination and ozone. The growth rate is about three to four new accounts per month. The distribu-

The Pablo Water District has four wells and provides approximately 470 hook-ups. The district has identified the need for distribution line upgrades and additional storage capacity to provide for fire protection services and meet growth demands.

The unincorporated area of Woods Bay (Sheaver’s Creek) has an operating water system with 88 connections. The system has a number of serious problems. The district uses a combination of surface water and groundwater. The surface water does not meet state drinking water standards for filtration and is of variable quantity. According to the project engineer, the well water exceeds state drinking water stan-

Table 5-2: Major Water Systems in Lake County

Name	Hook-Ups	Water Source	Storage Capacity (Gallons)	Planned Improvements
Charlo	425	2 wells (1 currently inoperable)	40,000	An additional supply well. Additional storage capacity.
Pablo	470	4 wells	--	Additional storage capacity.
Polson	2,400	4 wells	2.5 million	Either bring water to east side of Flathead River or develop new sources.
Ronan	892	2 wells	1.6 million	Investigating additional storage needs.
St. Ignatius	303	2 wells	300,000	No improvements planned.
Sheaver’s Creek (Woods Bay)	88	Surface and groundwater	--	Whole new system for 120 users.

Source: Interviews with district administrators, November 2002.

tion system was upgraded in 1991. New storage facilities may be needed to meet future demand.

St. Ignatius relies on groundwater with two wells and 300,000 gallons in storage. The distributions system was upgraded about 20 years ago. The Charlo water system includes a 40,000-gallon storage tank, distribution system, and fire hydrants. A major improvement to the distribution system was completed in the late 1980s. The storage reservoir, however, has capacity below what is recommended by the state and one well recently stopped producing.

dards for fluoride by four times. The entire distribution system is antiquated and needs to be replaced. In fact, at certain high-demand times of the day, no water is available to some users, which presents a potential safety risk in the event of a fire. The total project, which would serve 120 users, is estimated to cost over \$2 million and construction should take place as soon as possible. The Sheaver’s Creek water district has an engineering report in hand and has received funding from the United States Department of Agriculture and the State of Montana.

Waste Water Treatment

Most of the rural residents in Lake County use individual sewage disposal systems (septic tanks and drainfields) for sewage disposal. The Montana Sanitation in Subdivision Act requires the review and approval of proposed water, sewer, solid waste and stormwater drainage in all subdivisions and most land divisions that are exempt from local government review. The Act allows local review on non-Tribal and non-trust lands of land divisions into parcels over 20 acres in size that will use individual on-site water and sewer facilities or that will connect to an existing public water and sewer system. The Lake County Environmental Health Department provides this local review. Permitting for larger sewer systems is handled by the EPA and by the Montana Department of Environmental Quality.

A number of municipal and public wastewater treatment systems exist in Lake County and more are in the planning stages. In 1988 Pablo formed a sewer district with metered service. Pablo has a two cell non-aerated lagoon, a two cell aerated lagoon and land application. The system underwent a major upgrade in the late 1990s with new storage and aeration equipment and 11 miles of new collection lines. It was believed that the upgrade would accommodate growth for 15 to 20 years. After less than five years and unprecedented population growth (the area grew by 42 percent during the 1990s), the system is again at capacity and a moratorium is currently in place. The Pablo Sewer District has an engineering report in hand and is applying for funding to help upgrade the system again.

The City of Polson's topography requires that all sewage generated in Polson (there are no connections outside the city limits) be pumped to the treatment system. The sewage collection system includes about 30 miles of mains and nine lift stations. The treatment plant consists of three aerated lagoons, a polishing pond, and a surface discharge of treated effluent to the Flathead River.

Polson's sewage treatment plant has a ca-

capacity of 675,000 gallons per day and is currently operated at about 78 percent of its capacity. Treatment capacity should be adequate in



Treated effluent from the Polson sewage treatment plant is discharged into the Flathead River.

the near future, especially if the city continues to eliminate stormwater flows and groundwater infiltration by replacing older mains. The age and capacity of the lift stations is another issue.

The Polson Capital Improvement Plan anticipates a two-phased approach to address lift station improvements. Phase I includes collection system improvements, lift station replacement, pretreatment, aeration upgrades, and sludge removal at the existing lagoons. Phase 2 involves the construction of an oxidation ditch treatment system. A portion of the first phase was completed in 2000 while the second phase will be completed in the future when system reserve capacity is depleted.

The City of Ronan sewage treatment includes a three-cell aerated lagoon that is discharged into Crow Creek. The City recently upgraded and expanded the facility to have a capacity of 376,000 gallons per day and includes the state's first constructed wetlands used for tertiary treatment. As of this writing, Ronan has excess capacity in its wastewater treatment system.

The Town of St. Ignatius has a single-cell aerated lagoon with a settling pond that is discharged into Matt Creek. The area north of Mission Creek is served by the town sewer sys-

tem while the area south of Mission Creek is on a Tribal sewer system. There are currently 257 hook-ups to the town sewer system and the treatment plant is at or above capacity. The system is occasionally not in compliance with the terms of its discharge permit. St. Ignatius currently has a moratorium on new sewage hookups although they have an upgrade plan completed and are seeking funding to help cover the costs. They are hoping to get improvements to the system started in early 2003.

The citizens of Arlee have formed a sewer

and adding wetlands treatment at the outflow. The Charlo district has a portion of the funding and is seeking funding from additional sources to reach the target rate for system users.

Facility plans for other unincorporated communities in Lake County have been completed but never implemented. Woods Bay, Big Arm, and Swan Lake all have concentrations of population that warrant sewage treatment systems but due to costs, financing, and coordinating property owner and government agency participation, no systems have been constructed.

Table 5-3: Major Sewage Treatment Facilities in Lake County

Name	System	Capacity (Gallons per Day)	Customers	Planned Improvements
Charlo	Single cell lagoon	---	425	New treatment cell, upgrading existing cell, upgrading the collection system and adding wetlands treatment for effluent.
Pablo	2 cell lagoon, 2 cell aerated lagoon, land application	--	410	Largescale 20-year expansion project
Polson	3 cell aerated Lagoons & one polishing cell.	675,000	1965	Lift station, pretreatment, aeration upgrades & sludge removal.
Ronan	3 cell aerated lagoon.	376,000	850	Recently upgraded to include wetland for tertiary treatment.
St. Ignatius	Single cell lagoon with settling ponds.	---	257	Study underway and seeking funding to upgrade treatment plant.

Source: Interviews with District Administrators, June -August, 1999

district to construct facilities in that community. The district has received funding and land acquisition is complete and construction should begin in 2003. Initially the system will serve an estimated 210 households but will have a design capacity for 300 users. The district is negotiating with the Salish & Kootenai Housing Authority to handle the operation and maintenance of its facility.

The Charlo Sewer District operates a three-acre, single-cell aerated lagoon that discharges into Mission Creek. A facilities plan was recently produced for this system that identifies a number of needs, including adding a new treatment cell, updating the existing cell, addressing numerous problems with the collection system

This has resulted in threats to groundwater and surface water and in some cases has resulted in a moratorium on new septic systems.

A number of tribal wastewater treatment systems are also present in Lake County. Of particular note is the Elmo system, which recently received funding from the United States Department of Agriculture to expand the existing sewage lagoons and install a sprinkler irrigation system.

Stormwater Management

New commercial, industrial and residential developments are required to contain their stormwater runoff on site, where it evaporates and infiltrates into the soil over time. There are

numerous methods to contain the water, including in sumps, swales and underground structures. The containment method depends on site-specific factors including depth to ground water, soil types, space available and topography.

In 1996, local storm water samples collected by researchers at the Flathead Lake Biological Station were shown to contain elevated levels of heavy metals (lead, zinc, aluminum, etc.), volatile organic compounds (fuels), nitrates and fecal coliform bacteria. All of the above constituents represent threats to human health and water quality (B. Ellis, personal correspondence, 4/10/00). Urbanized areas typically collect the runoff in storm sewers and discharge the water into surface water bodies, as the City of Polson discharges into Flathead Lake. Many states are required to permit storm water as a point source, although this is not yet the case in Montana. In almost all cases, storm water in the Flathead Basin receives no treatment prior to discharge into area streams. As the area becomes more urbanized, Lake County is likely to require that the stormwater management systems for development projects reflect on-site conditions (i.e., vulnerable aquifers) and that a management method be in place during and after development to prevent negative impacts to ground and surface water quality.

Solid Waste

Landfills

The Lake County Solid Waste Management District currently operates the Lake County Landfill, located about three miles southwest of

Polson. The landfill is licensed for municipal waste and provides service to Lake County, Dixon, and Hot Springs. The landfill has a short life expectancy, perhaps as little as until 2004. The County is in the process of closing its existing landfill, constructing a central transfer station and transporting its waste to a permitted area outside of Lake County. At present, the primary revenue source for the landfill is an annual \$103 charge per household, which is included on the property tax bill for lands held in fee. Land held in trust is difficult to bill and some residents choose not to pay. Businesses that are directly charged but neglect to pay the fee are also an issue. There are no tipping charges at the landfill.

Residents can use one of the four commercial haulers that provide pick-up service in the County or can utilize seven container sites scattered throughout the County, as depicted on the map titled Landfills and Container Sites. Container sites are for the disposal of household wastes. Residents and businesses can also bring waste directly to the landfill. Commercial haulers deliver approximately 50 percent of the volume at the landfill. The waste volume being disposed of at the landfill has been steadily increasing, as shown on the following table.

In addition to the County Landfill, the Solid Waste Management District also maintains a Class III Landfill for inert waste. The inert waste landfill is a gravel pit that is still active as a gravel producer. Inert waste is generally wood wastes and non-water soluble solids that include untreated wood, tree trimmings, concrete, brick, rock and tree stumps. The Tire Depot and Plum

Table 5-4: Landfill Waste Volume Summaries

	1997	1999	2001
Municipal Waste (cubic yd)	269,243	306,216	330,601
Yard Waste (cubic yd)	8,153	4,016	2,757
Construction/Demolition (cubic yd)	21,094	23,078	16,301
Total Waste (cubic yd)	298,491	333,310	349,659
Average Yards/Day (10 cubic yards=1 ton)	843	939	985

Source: Lake County Solid Waste Management District

Creek Timber also have sites licensed as Class III landfills in the Pablo vicinity.

There are a number of closed landfills and dump sites in the County. Most of the sites have been covered and sites at Woods Bay, Charlo, Swan Lake and Elmo are now container sites. Recently, the Tribal Solid Waste Office conducted a preliminary evaluation of these old sites to assess potential environmental issues and remedial efforts. The Tribes have already cleaned up a dozen of these sites.

Recycling & Hazardous Waste

Tires, metals, appliances, and motor oil are collected at the landfill for recycling or reprocessing. There is no formal recycling program for the County although a non-profit organization, The Folkshop, has drop off sites in Polson and Ronan for aluminum, metal, used clothing and furniture, cardboard, newspaper, and business paper.

Household hazardous waste and used vehicle batteries are currently accepted at the landfill with special instructions for disposal. Mo-

Pablo, is a federally owned utility that is operated under contract by the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. MVP provides electricity to all of Lake County within the reservation borders. The utility owns the power distribution network and relies on hydroelectric power sources including Kerr Dam, located on the Flathead River and operated by the PP&L Montana, and the Boulder Creek Hydroelectric Project, built by the Tribes. MVP characterizes the power supply as sufficient to meet foreseeable future demand.

Residential customers account for 57 percent of sales revenue while small commercial accounts comprise 32 percent of sales revenue. Plum Creek Timber, a large commercial user in Pablo, accounts for six percent of sales revenue with irrigation and street lighting making up the balance. The utility has experienced an increase in both the number of accounts and power sold that reflects the recent population growth of the County. Residential and small commercial rates are below the state average and have been less volatile in recent years than rates across the state and region.

Table 5-5: Mission Valley Power Customers

	Feb - 97	Feb - 98	Feb - 99
Residential Accounts	11,575	11,688	11,898
Small Commercial Accounts	2,355	2,461	2,532
Total Accounts	15,013	15,244	15,520

Source: Mission Valley Power, Monthly Report, January, 1999

tor oil is accepted at most container sites, the landfill and many automotive businesses in Lake County. A program is being developed to better deal with the disposal of household hazardous waste. Commercial and agricultural chemical wastes are not accepted at the landfill. The EPA monitors all hazardous waste generators on the Flathead Indian Reservation.

Electricity

Mission Valley Power

Mission Valley Power (MVP), located in

Mission Valley Power continues to upgrade its facilities to replace obsolete equipment and keep pace with growing demand. These upgrades include the rebuilding of distribution lines, substations and transformers. A new substation for Ravalli was completed in 1999. The Elmo, Irvine Flats, Arlee, and Finley Point substations have recently been improved or are scheduled for upgrades. Property has been purchased for a future substation near Lake Mary Ronan and a new substation is being planned for Ronan to respond to the increased demand from the New Jore Corporation.

Other Power Utilities

There is no natural gas service in Lake County. Two electric cooperatives provide service in the county to areas that are located outside of reservation boundaries. Missoula Electric Cooperative serves the area in south Swan Valley while north Swan Valley and the area north of Dayton and the Rollins area are served by Flathead Electric Cooperative.

Telecommunications

Telephone

There are three independent local telephone companies that provide service in Lake County. CenturyTel (formerly PTI Communications) is based in Kalispell and serves Polson plus the area to the north, including the Swan Valley. Ronan Telephone Company serves the Ronan and Pablo exchanges while the Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative in Missoula serves Charlo and communities south of Charlo. All three companies have digital switches and offer custom calling, CLASS services such as caller ID, and voice mail. Advanced services such as ISDN and Frame relay are available in the CenturyTel service area as well as in the Ronan Telephone Company and Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative service areas. Newer high-speed data services, such as digital subscriber lines (DSL), are available.

The State of Montana is divided into three Local Access and Transport Areas (LATAs) for purposes of providing long distance service. The City of Polson is located in the northwest LATA while the rest of Lake County south of Polson is located in the west LATA. Calls originating from Polson to anywhere south within the County are long distance.

Cellular phone service is provided by Cellular One, Verizon and Blackfoot. Digital wireless and personal communication service are available in Lake County and appear to be the direction the companies are heading. A number of wireless communication towers have emerged to serve the growing wireless market. The towers can be met with hostility if they are located

in residential areas. Lake County and Polson adopted the first wireless communication facility ordinance for the Polson Master Plan area. In order to allow this economically and technologically important service to grow while limiting its impacts to area residents and visitors, Lake County will develop a similar wireless communication facility ordinance for the unincorporated areas in the near future.

Cable Television and Video

Cable operators receive programs from satellite and broadcast signals, and re-transmit these signals through coaxial cable and/or optical fiber to customers' homes. Local governments may negotiate certain services through the cable franchise agreements. Charter Communications, based in Missoula, is the cable provider in Ronan, Pablo, Arlee and Polson. St. Ignatius has cable services through Mallard Cable Vision.

MetNet is a State-operated video network that serves higher education facilities and State administrative offices. Salish and Kootenai College has video conferencing capabilities. St. Luke's Hospital in Ronan has videoconferencing equipment as part of the University of Washington Rural Telemedicine Project, and St. Joseph's hospital has received a grant for telemedicine conferencing equipment.

Internet

There are four internet providers in Lake County offering local dial-up service, dedicated lines and DSL. Ronan Telephone Company and Ronan Montana Internet serve the Ronan area while Compuplus and Century Tel (which recently purchased DigiSys, Inc.) serve the Polson area. Despite the local availability of internet service, there is a definite lack of high capacity infrastructure in Lake County, as is the case in much of rural America. This may be a limiting factor in terms of business expansion and attraction, although technological solutions such as wireless capabilities may be able to meet the demand. All of the schools and libraries in the county have internet access with varying degrees of use by the public.

Public Facilities

Goals and Objectives

Policy Statement

Lake County will strive to promote the provision of adequate infrastructure and services in support of existing and future development in a manner that is fiscally efficient, far-sighted and environmentally sound.

The goals and objectives provided below were developed by comparing the conditions and trends described in the previous text with public input and the experience of local officials, planning board members and staff. The purpose of this section is to provide a vision of how the community intends to grow (goals) and state the specific steps Lake County intends to take to ensure the goals are achieved (objectives).

After each objective is a phrase or group of phrases in italic print. These phrases indicate the specific tools that Lake County intends to use to achieve the objectives. The tools are described in the implementation section of this document.

1. Goal

Provide for the development and maintenance of a safe, efficient and environmentally sound transportation network.

Objectives

- A. Work in conjunction with the Federal Highway Administration, the Montana Department of Transportation and the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes to develop local traffic alternatives to U.S. Highway 93 that link the communities of southern Lake County. (*Capital Improvements Planning {CIP} and intergovernmental coordination*)
- B. Prioritize County road improvement projects by evaluating roads based on safety concerns, the number of vehicle trips per day, the potential to link communities and guide growth, air and water quality concerns, the number of homeowners impacted by road dust and other criteria. (*CIP*)
- C. Set standards for requiring chip sealing, paving and the provision of pedestrian facilities in new developments. (*Subdivision review*)
- D. Develop separate standards for urban and rural subdivisions to reflect the need for greater parking, snow storage, pedestrian movement and utility placement space in urban developments. (*Subdivision review*)
- E. Encourage the formation of citizen road improvement districts that support Lake County's road improvement priorities for the hard surfacing of private roads. (*CIP and citizen participation*)

- F. Explore requiring developers to dedicate roadways and easements to the public while keeping maintenance responsibilities private within a homeowners association in order to minimize public expenditures. *(Subdivision review)*
- G. Identify, prioritize, seek funding for and develop non-motorized transportation projects, particularly those that link residential and commercial development and communities. *(CIP, intergovernmental coordination, subdivision review and recreation planning)*
- I. Encourage the establishment and use of public transportation that links population centers in order to reduce congestion and increase safety and efficiency along U.S. Highway 93. *(Intergovernmental coordination, public-private partnerships)*
- J. Protect airports from development projects that compromise safety and limit their opportunity to expand. *(Airport Influence Zone planning)*
- K. Require developers to connect streets where appropriate and provide easements for future road connections. *(Subdivision review)*
- L. Require developers to provide secondary ingress and egress for new developments in order to protect public health and safety and allow traffic to disperse. *(Subdivision review)*
- M. Require developers to provide traffic impact studies on some projects to gauge the effects of development projects on transportation facilities and traffic flow and require road upgrades to handle additional traffic if appropriate. *(Subdivision review and zoning)*
- N. Develop parking, circulation, landscaping, lighting, buffering, signage and design standards for commercial and high-impact residential projects. *(Subdivision review, U.S. Highway 93 corridor planning and zoning)*

2. Goal

Aid existing public water and sewer districts, including the public works departments within the incorporated towns, and encourage the formation of new districts where appropriate in order to protect human health and safety, protect high quality natural resources and guide population growth.

Objectives

- A. Update and expand the *Lake County Capital Improvements Plan for Solid Waste, Water Supply and Wastewater Treatment Facilities* annually to define priorities and help the districts take advantage of funding opportunities. *(CIP)*
- B. Aid all current districts in their facility upgrade efforts by writing letters of support and providing administrative and other services as appropriate. *(CIP, intergovernmental coordination and citizen participation)*
- C. Provide guidance and limited financial assistance to early-stage sewer districts and encourage the formation of new ones where appropriate. *(Intergovernmental coordination and citizen participation)*
- D. Administer grants and enter into public-private partnerships as appropriate. *(Intergovernmental coordination, CIP and public-private partnerships)*

3. Goal

Ensure that commercial, industrial and residential developments have adequate sewer, water supply and stormwater management facilities.

Objectives

- A. Require developers to meet state and local sewage disposal and water supply standards for new developments. *(Subdivision review)*
- B. Provide incentive for owners of aging and potentially failing septic systems to either connect to public facilities or replace their individual ones. *(Public-private partnerships)*
- C. Require stormwater management plans during the review phase of development projects and ensure the approved containment structures are built through the permitting process. *(Subdivision review and zoning)*
- D. Develop specifications for building setbacks and vegetative buffers along waterways to filter stormwater runoff while allowing homeowners to utilize their water frontage and protect their homes from fire danger. *(Subdivision review and zoning)*

4. Goal

Require developers to pay for the impacts of their projects on public infrastructure and services.

Objectives

- A. Produce reasonable and legally defensible impact fee studies and schedules. (*Impact fee and subdivision reviews*)
- B. Bring any proposed impact fee plans to private sector representatives, the Planning Board, and the public for review and then send to the County Commissioners for adoption. (*Impact fees and citizen participation*)

5. Goal

Aid the development and expansion of communication facilities and other infrastructure while protecting the area's scenic resources.

Objective

- A. Develop standards for wireless communication facilities. (*Wireless communication facility planning*)

6. Goal

Take steps to minimize impacts of development on irrigation facilities.

Objective

- A. Continue to develop and revise policies with the Joint Board of Control, the Flathead Irrigation Project and the public to ensure that land development has a minimal impact on agricultural water users facilities. (*Subdivision review*)

7. Goal

Ensure that solid waste in Lake County is disposed of in a safe, cost-effective and environmentally sound manner.

Objectives

- A. Close the current Class II landfill and provide for post-closure monitoring in compliance with state and federal regulations. (*CIP*)
- B. Construct a central transfer station that accommodates future growth needs, waste separation, recycling, composting and efficient drop-off and transport. (*CIP*)
- C. Continue to work with tribal authorities in an effort to ensure that the costs of disposing of solid waste are fairly distributed. (*CIP*)
- D. Explore the option of transporting solid waste vial rail in addition to roadways. (*CIP*)